

WATERFOWL TOMORROW - US Dept of Interior, Bureau of Sport Fisheries
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Excerpted from "Talon and Fang"

p.330

For the trumpeter swan, we have accurate data on numbers. For its range in the United States, chiefly northwestern Wyoming and south-central Montana, Winston E. Banko traced the growth of the trumpeter population from fewer than 100 in the early thirties to about 700 by the early sixties.

Predators known to prey on the swans were abundant in places and scarce in others. Predator control was practiced on some areas and not on others, and some movements of swans from one area to another were noted. But the trumpeter swans showed patterns of growth similar to those of the bobwhite quail. As the overall population increased, the rates of gain went down in ways that seem to indicate a considerable automatic adjustment in reproductive rates and survival of young, regardless of whether losses are due to predation or other causes.

We have some information on the compensations and conformity to patterns of other waterfowl.

Frank C. Bellrose and Elizabeth Brown Chase compared losses suffered by mallards, black ducks, and blue-winged teal. The mallard, the most hunted by people, suffered the lowest "natural" losses; the black duck, subject to intermediate intensities of human hunting, suffered "natural" losses intermediate between those of the mallard and the teal. Mr. Bellrose and Mrs. Chase concluded that the shooting toll probably absorbed a large proportion of the mallard losses that otherwise would have occurred in an unshot population and that the blue-wings may be able to withstand more hunting by people without raising their total mortality rates very much.

Those contrasts indicate that causes of death tend to substitute for each other in natural counter-balancings of waterfowl populations just as they do in bobwhite quail.

---Paul L. Errington